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CENTENNIAL OBSERVANCE.

Gathering of the Descendants

OF

Nathan Griffin,

AT THE

OLD HOMESTEAD,

IN STOCKTON,

MARCH 30, 1863.

BELFAST:
T. J. & G. W. BURGESS.
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No other century, in all the grand march of time, for invention and improvement, has half equalled the immediate past.

Had the Creative Power given Nathan Griffin, amid all the vicisitudes of the past, the choice of birth-time, it could have been none other than that allotted him.

Born amid the spring time of human affairs; in the very budding of moral, scientific and intellectual life and living, by the good providence of an indulgent God, from the beginning of one century almost to the commencement of another, and until such ripened harvests were around him, how could a more variegated and eventful lifetime have been conferred upon a human being.

Our ancester was born in Stonington, Connecticut, in 1763. With his father and other members of the family, he emigrated to this vicinity in 1775—the very year in which the pen of the Goddess of Liberty, dipped in a patriot's blood, wrote "Liberty or Death" all over this wilderness world! This Harbor, with its present pleasant slopes, and farms and fences, and streets, its white cottages and magnificent residences, then presented an unbroken forest, tracked by wild beasts and the wilder Indian upon his trail—How uninviting for a home! What sacrifice must be made! Yet those pioneers were equal to the task.

Sixteen years only before this (1659) Gov. Pownall of Massachusetts Colony, with dauntless courage, accompanied by a band of hardy men, had raised the first emblem of civilized power on the territory of this town; thus forming the first permanent white settlement on the Penobscot Bay and River.

Removed, thus but 16 years from the first sound of civilization and on the very year of the landing of our ancestor on the shores of

the Penobscot Bay; the dark days of the *Revolution*, so pregnant of good in their results, hovered down upon the scattered inhabitants.

None but the participants in these scenes could ever estimate the privations endured, the sacrifices made!

None but they who *paid the price* can ever realize the cost of settling and establishing the liberty of this country.

My Grandfather, whose memory we cherish to-day, and whose honored name I bear, as the gift of a mother, long since in Heaven, has often told me, as in my boyhood I listened around his knee, that as the only alternative to save him from starvation, he has cut through *three feet of ice* on yonder flats, for *clams* for his *breakfast.*

This is only one of the indications of destitution to which these early settlers were exposed; still energy and will surmounted all obstacles, and better days dawned.

Nathan Griffin was married in 1790, to Elizabeth Treat, daughter of Joshua Treat, one of the officers of the expedition under Gov. Pownal, already alluded to, for the settlement of this Bay and River. She was a woman of rare integrity of character, intelligent, faithful and untiring. She lived to the age of 66. He lived to the good old age of 91.

By that marriage was produced ten children, seven sons and three daughters—six of whom, John, Nathan, Nahum, James, Jesse and Isaac still survive. One daughter died in infancy; the other two, Catharine and Desiah, lived to maturity and married Joseph Park and Henry Hichborn. They both died at about the age of 36, leaving large families and many friends to mourn their early departure.

Peleg, also, the eldest son, died at about the same age, leaving a bereaved family, and lamented by all. With one exception all the other members of the family are married and have produced large families, some of whom are dead, many living and married, themselves having become, in some instances, grand parents.

The entire number of descendants, dead and alive, now amount to—Children, 10; Grand Children, 66; Great Grand Children, 93; Great Great Grand Children, 9. Total, 178.

Among all this extensive progeny, so far as to myself is known, no member has ever become a public charge, or been arrested for crime! Intemperance has numbered no victims among them!

Industry has been cherished as a cardinal virtue; and industry rarely goes unrewarded or degenerates into crime.

The marked characteristics of Nathan Griffin were, honest industry, a social temper and a benevolent and cheerful heart!

These were ever prominent, making life, which otherwise at times might have been almost intolerable, a pleasant and happy allotment.

In this way he cheered and delighted the young lives of his numerous descendants, and smoothed his own down to an honored grave.

As falls the leaf when its uses are past and its mission fulfilled; as falls the fruit in the full ripened harvest, so went he, in the maturity of manhood, his labors fully done, down to the harvest of death to which all the living are so rapidly tending.

He had lived to see his children and many of his children's children ripen into vigorous manhood and womanhood; had lived to see the efforts of his early life, for the settlement of the country, crowned with abundant success—lived to see the tide of oppression once

and again rolled back from the land of his birth and of his love—lived to see his country rank high in the sisterhood of nations; exhaustless in her resource and proud in her strength; extending her institutions of learning and charity, and broadening and deepening her channels of humanity; with but a single hindrance to check her onward and upward march to the very climax of liberty, union and power.

He lived in fact, to see more originated, matured and in an advanced stage of progress; more that is big with the interests of humanity, than any ten generations of men that had preceded him—lived to see the great idea of *universal rights* of equality before the law, so fully recognized by the nations of the old as well as the new world, that every form of despotism, anxious for its very existence, trembles and totters to its fall.

He did not however live to see all the elements of waning despotism in the old world, concentrating all their virus in a single institution in our own country, for a last and final struggle *with universal man for universal rights.*

Had he lived he would have thanked God that the contest is waged when and where it is; that the battlefield is one early baptised with the blood of patriots; men who preferred death to bondage and proclaimed "*Liberty or death*" to the world. He would bid us remember the sacrifices of the Fathers and their success, and exhort us to increased faith and redoubled energy in the certain work of relieving our country and world of the most dangerous element, to peace, to Liberty and good government that ever scourged the race! Catching then, on this hallowed spot, his inspiration, may we all strive to imitate his virtues, re-live his cheerful, industrious and benevolent life, in the full faith that ere many more of his descend-

ents shall follow him to that haven of rest, already reached by himself, the angel Liberty, now anxiously waiting, shall bear home to Heaven the glad tidings of Despotism dethroned; Slavery destroyed and Liberty and Union triumphant—"Peace therefore on earth and good will to men."